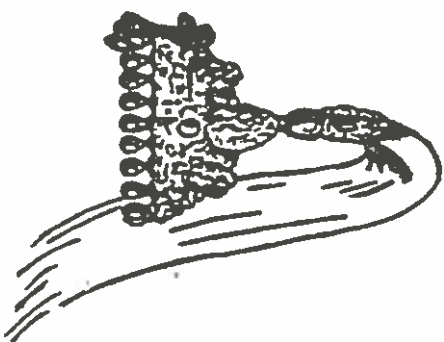


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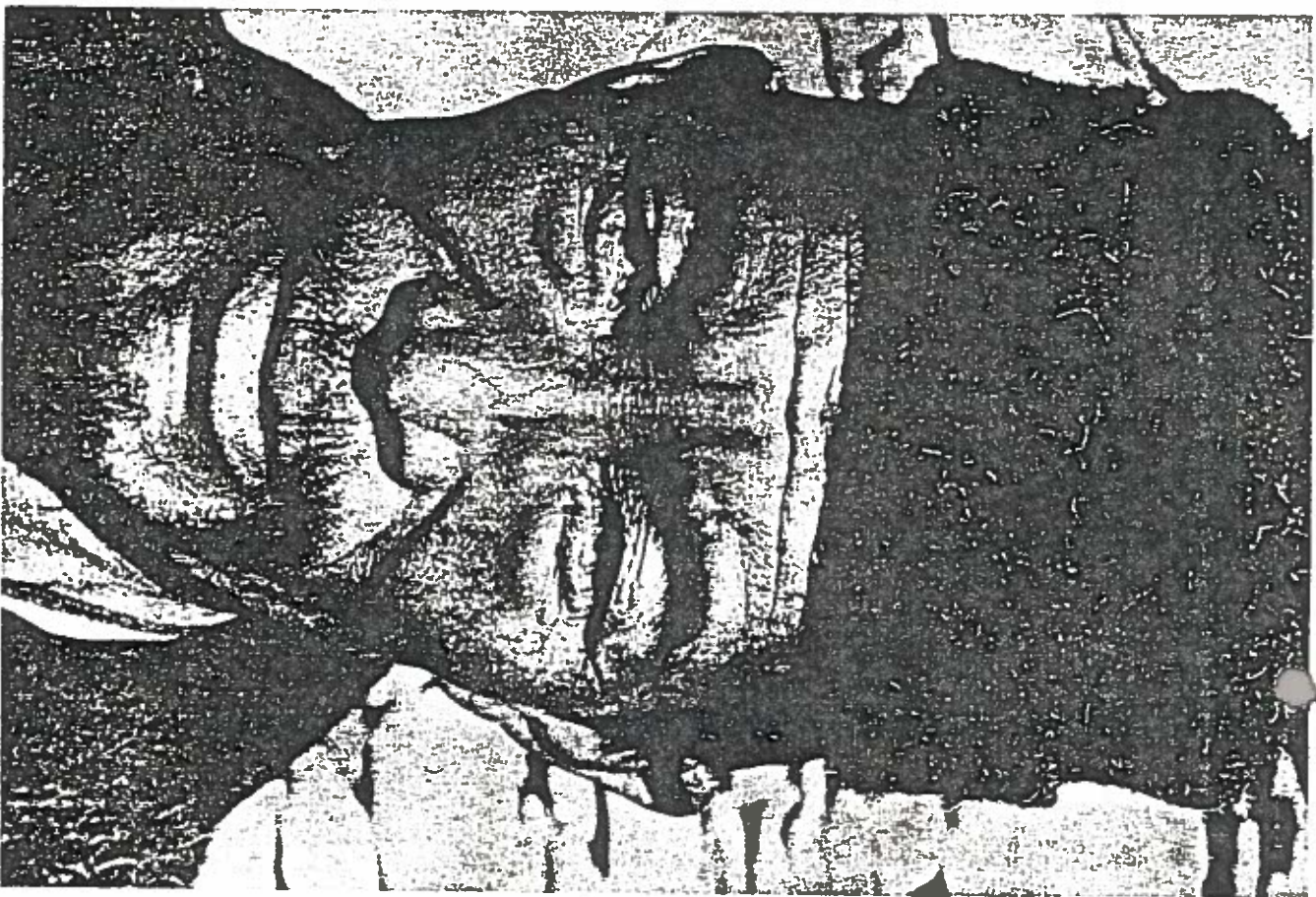


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A Kham-Magar of the Bhuda clan, Taka village.

his healing method, and so on, is of a particular type. The Kham-Magar tradition is basically Siberian in its orientation, giving evidence of considerable influence from this so-called "classical" tradition of Inner Asia³. Furthermore, it exhibits relatively little syncretism of other traditions, and as such may provide anthropologists with a new perspective in their attempts at unraveling the complex interrelations between the various cultural traditions converging in Nepal.

The Kham-Magars call their shamans rmā or armā (ramā by metathesis in some dialects) which may be etymologically related to the Tibetan ma-bya (bya 'bird') meaning 'peacock' or 'mottled bird' (Das 1902:198). Taken as such, the term is suggestive of the Kham-Magar shaman in full ceremonial dress, covered with the feathers of the blue Monal Pheasant. In many areas, the indigenous term rmā has been replaced by the Nepali term shankri.

The Shaman's Call

The shamanic calling is not something which can be actively sought after but is viewed as a gift granted by the spirits themselves, but only to persons of correct lineage. As such, the shaman's calling is, in a very real sense, as much spontaneous as it is hereditary. It is hereditary to the extent that it is granted to a kinsman of the former shaman, but it is spontaneous to the extent that it is not transmitted to a predetermined kinsman, but to one chosen by the spirit of the deceased shaman⁴. This method of election has sometimes been referred to as the "quasi-hereditary" transmission of the calling (Krader 1967:116).

Transmission of the shamanic gift does not take place until after the death of the father shaman. The ancestral spirit, or gel⁵ (varying with gyal; cf. Tibetan gyal-po 'king, chieftain, ruler' [Das 1902:310]), chooses one of his own kinsmen to carry on the profession. Often, the gel examines several young men before making his final choice. Examination takes place in a hierarchical order beginning with the deceased shaman's sons and grandsons. If none of these are suitable, the gel chooses from among the lineage of the deceased shaman's brothers and then finally from among his sisters' sons. He continues his search until he finds a desirable candidate. According to local consensus, one of the chief qualifications for which the gel is searching is a record of religious fidelity, characterized by routine animal sacrifices to local deities and ancestor spirits. Of very recent innovation is a subsidiary concept of ceremonial purity, especially as regards food, but I have seen only one such case. The son of one of the more powerful shamans in Sera had hopes that his own son (then a child of 3 or 4 years) would carry on the shamanic tradition of his aging grandfather. To insure the transmission of the spirit, he withheld from the child foods which would defile him—chiefly beef and pork. Normally, Kham-Magars do not concern themselves with food restrictions, and even the shamans enjoy beef and pork. Presumably, the father's concern was a recent innovation from Hindu philosophy, and he was exercising caution lest the gel find even

After an indefinite period of abnormal or hysteroid behavior (in the case of Bai Bahadur it was one year), the neophyte falls into a trance and begins to 'prophesy'. His gel makes an announcement in the following terms:

"I am so-and-so, the son of so-and-so.
I have come to be re-born in the body of my son.
Hurry, make me a thumbu and give me birth.
You must hurry, lest we (spirits) bring calamity to
the household.
We will push him off a cliff; we will push him in the
river; we will throw him in the fire.
Hurry, make me a thumbu and give me birth".

The candidate's family appeals to an experienced shaman and arrangements are made for the thumbu and 'birth' ceremonies. Making a thumbu and 'giving birth' are separate ceremonies: the former being conducted on the day of the new moon and the latter on the day of the full moon after some indefinite period. The thumbu ceremony is not done at public expense but must be borne by the candidate's immediate family. As such, its timing is dictated by urgency on the one hand, and by financial expediency on the other. The major part of the expense is to provide plenty of food and liquor for the participating shamans for a day and a night.

The thumbu itself is a container, usually a large gourd, into which lādu sē (a symbol of purification) and barley are deposited in any measure of nine--either nine grains, nine fistfuls, or nine cups. It is in this gourd that the savage helping spirits are kept in custody and regulated like a genie in his lamp. (For the word thumbu, cf. Tibetan thum 'anything packed or wrapped up, a parcel' [Das 1902:582]).

The first part of the thumbu ceremony is conducted at the burial cairn of the ancestor shaman. Including the candidate, 9, 7.5, or 3 shamans are present to test the veracity of his potentially reckless claims that he has been chosen as the father shaman's successor. He must show convincing evidence that the gel is willing to confer to him the assistance and power of his unemployed spirits¹⁰. After certain preliminaries of purification, in which nine cones of purified water are placed around the cairn, the candidate's master, with the help of an assistant, begins to summon the spirits. Keeping rhythm with the hypnotic beat of their drums, the two chant in antiphony, the master shaman opening the lyric with one line and his assistant responding with the second. The chant is an epic of the first shaman, Pura Tsam, and the origin of various spirits. As the epic comes to its climax, the neophyte, who the whole time has been deeply absorbed in following the rhythm with his own drum, is suddenly thrown into convulsions. His face becomes distorted with terror and pain, suddenly changing to an expression of confused panic¹¹. The spirit has come! The shamans leap to their feet and dance a wild dance around the burial cairn until finally they settle again to summon the next spirit.



A young candidate being "attacked" by a spirit in the thumbu ceremony.

and Tibetan mantras are a part of every healing seance. There is also a ritualized language which includes many terms, phrases, and jingles unintelligible to the layman.

The Initiation Ceremony

On the day of the full moon, usually six months or so after the thumbu ceremony, the village shamans conduct a public ceremony known as bohsī-nyā, that is, 'birth' (from the root boh; cf. Sanskrit bhu 'come into being'). The observance of this ceremony is in compliance with the agreement made at the thumbu ceremony--promising the gel re-birth in exchange for his protection from the gling spirits. Traditionally, the ceremony took place only on a full moon of Baisak (April-May), but nowadays is observed in other months as well (I once attended the ceremony in Kartik [October-November]). As its name implies, the 'birth' ceremony is a formal recognition by the community of the ancestral shaman's re-birth and a commissioning of the candidate of his choice. It is significant to note that at the thumbu ceremony the candidate is not allowed to wear the shamanic costume, whereas at the bohsī-nyā ceremony he does wear it, giving evidence of his acceptance. He is invested with the authority of his ancestor and is placed into an apprentice relationship with his master who gives him instruction in shamanic techniques, in the oral mythology, and in the seance proper¹⁹.

The initiation ceremony of the Kham-Magars recounts various basic themes common in Siberia and Central Asia, the most prominent of them being 1) ascent to the sky, and 2) the birth of the shaman in a tree²⁰. The entire ceremony lasts for two nights and a day. That is, the main part of the ceremony takes place in the daytime, but there are related activities on the nights both preceding and following the ceremony proper. On the first night, nine pairs of village shamans meet together in the house of the future shaman where his family hosts the group, providing food and liquor. The firepit is swept, and the nine pairs of shamans sit around it in a circle and carry on a great shamanizing. The incidents of the first night are centered mostly around rites of purification. For three days they have taken no salt or meat. The future shaman's gel is invoked and libations of purified water and liquor are offered to him in the person of his successor²¹. A second major event of the first night is the release of the dohm.wā which have been held in custody since the thumbu ceremony.

Early in the morning on the day of the public ceremony, the new shaman goes into a trance and is taught by his gel the exact location of the ceremonial tree, called a suwā. He 'prophesies' disclosing its location, and sends men to fetch it. The tree cutters are sworn to silence, and should they meet anyone on the trail who asks where they are going, they are required to indicate their intention by showing their axe and a measure of chyonām, specially prepared beer and parched grain which is tossed at the

suwā when cutting it. The inquirer understands from this that he is to ask no further questions.

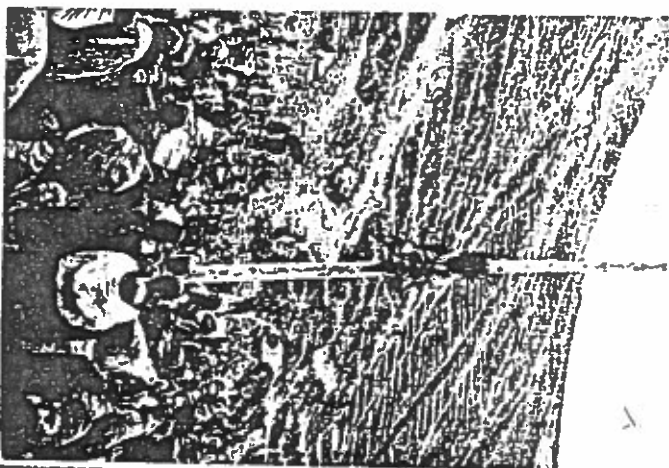
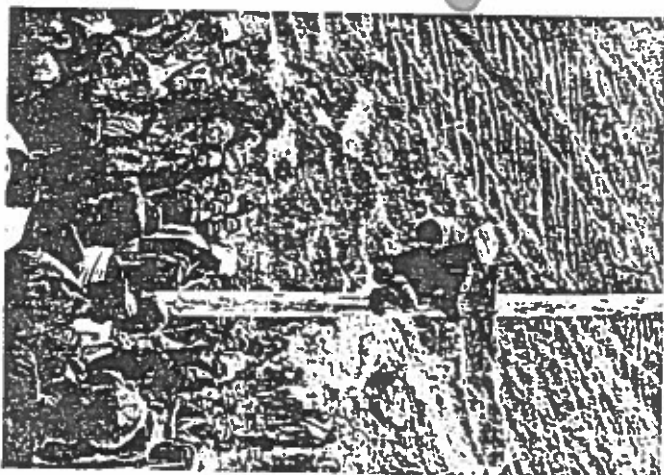
The suwā is a fir tree, usually about thirty feet in height and about a foot in diameter at the bottom. The pole is stripped of its bark, and the branches are lopped off except for the crown which is preserved²². A small platform is constructed about twelve feet from the ground level, large enough and strong enough to support the weight of a man. It is on this platform that the shaman is to be 'born'.

After the suwā has been cut and brought back, the shamans go out in search of the site on which it is to be erected. This is done by a sort of divination. The shamans dance out of the village in a group, some of them beating their drums, and the rest "running" their sahit ('wild goat'), or divination sticks. A master shaman dances in the lead, holding his drum thrust downward. It is said that through his drum he is able to discern the proper site, and he indicates it by crying, "Hap!" The shamans who are following him with their wild-goat sticks, thrust them into the ground in a circle and return to the village, leaving the sticks as a site marker. Later, the suwā is "planted" there with nine wild-goat sticks around its foot to prevent evil spirits from climbing the pole.

The ceremony proper begins with all nine pairs of shamans (the new shaman and his master constituting one pair) dancing from the village out to the site of the suwā--a distance of about half a mile. They dance violently, leaping and bouncing to the magical sound of their drums. The bells and iron pendants hanging from their bodies rattle and jingle at every bounce. It's quite a spectacle, indeed, eighteen dancing shamans wildly dressed in animal skins and great feather bonnets. A crowd of spectators, some from two or three days distance, lines the pathway from the village to the suwā eagerly anticipating the events of the day. Throughout the day, the shamans make a total of nine round trips from the village to the suwā. Upon arrival at the suwā they dance around it three times before returning to the village. On the final trip (the ninth) they dance first to the left, and then to the right, nine times in alternation (a total of 18 rounds). This final bout of dancing is not completed in a single act, but lasts about two hours.

The shamans sit around the pole in pairs facing each other, a master shaman and his assistant striking up a chant in antiphony. The other shamans absorb themselves in the hypnotic beat of their drums, keeping time with the master shaman and his assistant. As in the thumbu ceremony, the chants are myths of the first shaman, Pura Tsan and the various animal spirits. As each story reaches its climax, the new shaman suddenly takes on the personality of the spirit. Sitting crosslegged, his body twitches and bounces from the ground, and the rest of the shamans, seeing the signal,

a. Climbing the suwā with a ram's head as an offering to Bhagwān



b. A young initiate is 'born'

engage in a long ceremony for "casting off" any magical evils or destructive omens.

The Shaman's Costume

The shaman, during his shamanic practice, wears a special costume which in itself provides a number of useful insights into shamanic beliefs. By donning his costume, the shaman transforms himself into an animal or bird spirit. The costume is, in fact, regarded as a source of spiritual power for the shaman, for it represents, and is impregnated by his helping spirits. On several occasions I attempted to buy a costume from shamans in Sera. On the first occasion, a rather powerful shaman, named Deo, warned me that it could not be given to anyone who could not control it. He claimed that it would bring disaster to me and that I would continually have to make blood sacrifices to it. On another occasion, I had almost convinced a lesser shaman to sell his costume, but he finally refused, saying that it was in that costume that he was initiated and he would lose his power if he sold it. He said that he could make a replica, but he could never sell the real costume.²⁸

There are three chief types of costume found in Siberia and Central Asia--the bird, the reindeer, and the bear; but the most prevalent of these is the bird. The prevalence of the bird costume is due, no doubt, to the widespread belief that shamans can fly. Lommel suggests that the bird is symbolized because "it carries the shaman to the spirit world" (1969:112). The Kham-Magar costume, too, resembles a bird, and may prove to be the source for the shaman's name rmā, which means 'peacock' in Tibetan. The headgear is made of a hundred or so long feathers from the wings of the Monal Pheasant (Nepali, dāphe). They are arranged in such a way as to stand straight out from the head, giving the appearance of a great bird with ruffled feathers.

Bird symbolism is not the only feature of the Kham-Magar shaman's costume. The whole costume is, in fact, quite complex, featuring such things as a bearskin vest upon which are attached corrie shells and the tusks of a wild boar. From the back of the bearskin vest hang a number of animal and bird skins such as the panda bear, flying squirrel, monkey, weasel, owl, eagle, and pheasant. From the shoulders hang two iron claw-shaped bells, and from the chest hang a great number of brass bells. From the waist hang various iron pendants, the chief being nine iron suns, nine lunar crescents, and nine iron bells.²⁹ Czaplicka suggests that these iron pendants offer protection to the shaman, with the explanation that spirits fear the noise that was made in the smithy while iron implements were being made (1914:211). Joelsson, too, mentions that the iron pendants of the Ymkaghtir shaman are said to serve as a kind of armor in the fight with hostile shamans and spirits (1905).

They attacked Uncle, Shaman Tsan from his sides.

You cannot eat the shaman, you cannot eat the runju.

My loving elder sisters, my loving younger sisters,

You are evil spirits, you are evil witches.

On my sides are the tusks of a wild boar, of a savage boar.

They attacked Uncle, Shaman Tsan from his buttocks.

You cannot eat the shaman, you cannot eat the runju.

My loving elder sisters, my loving younger sisters,

You are evil spirits, you are evil witches.

On my buttocks are nine suns, nine moons, and nine bells.

They attacked Uncle, Shaman Tsan from his thighs.

You cannot eat the shaman, you cannot eat the runju.

My loving elder sisters, my loving younger sisters,

You are evil spirits, you are evil witches.

On my thighs are a pair of trousers.

They attacked Uncle, Shaman Tsan from his anus.

You cannot eat the shaman, you cannot eat the runju.

My loving elder sisters, my loving younger sisters,

You are evil spirits, you are evil witches.

I sit on a he-jom stool, a she-jom stool.

They attacked Uncle, Shaman Tsan from his feet.

You cannot eat the shaman, you cannot eat the runju.

My loving elder sisters, my loving younger sisters,

You are evil spirits, you are evil witches.

On my feet are the prints of the he-leopard, the prints of the she-leopard.

There is a special ceremony in which the village shamans assemble on the bank of the river to repair their equipment. The ceremony I observed took place on the day of the full moon in Baisak (April-May) in a year when there were no new shamans being initiated. Broken feathers were removed from their headgear and replaced by new ones. New animal skins were added to the backs of their vests, and in some cases, old, ragged ones were cast out. Drums needing repair were stretched with new skins, and repainted with new sketches.

The repair of each piece of equipment was followed by a time of chanting, done in antiphony by pairs of shamans. The theme of each chant is a history on the origin and development of the particular piece of equipment being celebrated. For example, while repairing the drum, the shamans chant histories of the drum hoop, the drum skin, the binding cords, the handles, and the drumsticks. The drum is personified by the personal pronoun 'you', and becomes the addressee of the chant³². The resumé of a typical chant for the drumskin is as follows:

"They tried the skins of all the wild animals,

but the gods weren't pleased, the spirits weren't happy.

So we went on a hunt, we went on a search.

Down in the low country, down in the plains,

they used the skin of the buck, they used the skin of the doe.

The gods were pleased, the spirits were happy.

But up in the mountains, high in the crags, what shall we use?

We went on a hunt, we went on a search.

We tried the mountain ram, we tried the mountain ewe.

But the gods wouldn't come, the spirits wouldn't come.

We tried the mountain billy, we tried the mountain nanny,

but the gods wouldn't come, the spirits wouldn't come.

Then we tried the wild he-sahr, we tried the wild she-sahr³³

You, sahr-pā skin were the one; you, sahr-mā skin rose to the need.

When we beat on the drum, the drum is delighted.

The gods are pleased with you, the spirits are happy with you".

The Shaman's Drum and Staff

The drum is without doubt the shaman's chief piece of equipment. It is with the drum that the shaman is able to summon his spirits and enter into contact with them. It is the drum that brings on the shaman's trance and enables him to journey to the sky and to the underworld. In short, the drum is indispensable to the primary core of the shamanic practice.

As pointed out by Czaplicka, there is an interesting linguistic correspondence in the word 'drum' all across Siberia and Central Asia. This correspondence is shared by some of the Nepal languages, as well. For example, in most Siberian tribes, the word is either tungur, dungur, or donkur. In Nepal the term is dhalangro, in Magar dhyagoro, in Sunwar tengro, and in Chepang rihgh. Kham has two terms: rehn-gor, which is used by the shamans, and dāhkur, the laymans term. Both appear to have a common etymology.

The Kham-Magar drum is circular to oval in shape, about 18 to 24 inches in diameter, and covered on one side with the skin of the sahr or 'wild goat'. The skin is bound to the hoop with strips of cowhide, the hoop being made of the wood of the gyl, which is a type of oak. On the back side of the drum is a handle of two cane sticks which slightly cross each other and are attached to the hoop on each of the ends by two rings linked together. When the drum is beat, the loosely bound handle creates a loud clattering noise from inside the hoop³⁴. The skin of the drum is sometimes decorated with white sketches of various types, some of which resemble hemispheres of the earth, and the sun, moon, and stars. I will not, however, attempt to interpret the drawings here.

Each shaman is required, sooner or later, to cut the wood for his own drum, and bring down the wild goat from whose skin the drum will be covered. Bal Bahadur cut the wood for his drum seven years after his initiation ceremony. He went into a trance and saw in a vision the exact spot where the tree grew. Taking nine

spirit. If a few simple mantras are not sufficient to expel it, the shaman, through the use of threats, forces the ghost to reveal his identity and purpose in coming. The *gyur-yāh* often requires the promise of an appeasement sacrifice and the burning of incense before agreeing to leave⁴⁴.

At the time of a person's burial, precautions are taken to prevent the return of his soul. The mat in which the corpse is buried is filled with corn, known as *sān.bal*, in the belief that if the soul is well fed in the otherworld, it will be happy. When carrying the body of the deceased out of the village for burial, it is preceded by a length of white cloth (some 50 or 60 feet long) known as a "way cloth" and is supposed to guide the soul from the village to its proper place. In addition, the funeral party, when returning to the village, scatters the trail with *sān.bal* in hopes that, should the spirit leave his grave, he will become preoccupied with picking up food, and never return⁴⁵. As a final act, a funeral banquet is held a few months after death, known as *gā khānyā*, or "casting away the soul". A sacrificial sheep whose sex corresponds to that of the deceased is decorated and dressed up to represent the deceased. The family assembles, feeds the sheep with the best of food, and with great weeping pronounces their blessings and good wishes upon it. The sheep is then taken away to the bank of the river by the deceased's *bānma* ('sister's son, or son-in-law'), where it is slaughtered and eaten by persons of low caste. The village seer (also a Kham-Nagar) is called upon to engrave the name of the deceased on a flat stone tablet, and then by means of mantras, he locks the soul (symbolized by the stone) into a large ancestor stand. As he buries the stone he proclaims,

"Go to the place of your grandfathers, your great-grandfathers. Be happy and prosper. Be content where you are. Do not come back to haunt us. Do not do us mischief. Be happy, be content where you are".

With this benediction, the village is purified of the soul's haunting presence, and the person is thereafter believed to have officially entered the realm of the dead. He is thereafter honored along with the rest of his ancestors in an annual sacrifice in which the *bānma* is the main officiant⁴⁶.

The Shaman's Seance

Most shamanic seances are performed to diagnose illness and to effect its cure. The healing seance has a great number of variants, and to describe them all would go beyond the scope of this paper. Thus, I will attempt to describe the general pattern with a few examples.

In general, the healing seance comes in two phases, with the possibility of a third in case the patient's soul has been "aggravated" from its place by some sort of evil or impurity. These

phases are 1) the diagnosis and attempt to re-call the soul from nearby, 2) the mystical journey beyond, and 3) expulsion of the evil or impurity. As we shall presently see, these three phases get different interpretations depending upon which of the three souls is missing. The whole seance is more "mystical" in case the missing soul is a *purus* (the *purus* is invisible); whereas, the same themes have a more "ritualized" interpretation, employing material symbols in case the soul being dealt with is a *sāto* or *gyākwā* (both are visible entities).

No seance begins without first erecting a *suwā*. The house *suwā* is a miniature, and is made by decorating the main pillar of the house (next to the fireplace) with the foliage of the *gyārgwā*, the tree from which Purnan Tsan the first shaman, was born. The *suwā*, or "World Tree" is the shaman's point of access both to the sky and to the underworld. The shaman denies access to these regions to the evil spirits by tying his 'wild-goat' slave to the foot of the *suwā*.

Members of the household and other interested individuals assemble to witness the events of the shaman's seance, known as *kā-nyā*. The shaman, sitting with his *celmi* or 'assistant' next to the fireplace, begins to beat his drum and invoke the various spirits, beginning with his *gel* or ancestor spirit. Pausing intermittently, the shaman's assistant begins to ask him questions about what he "sees". The questions usually have to do with future events, such as, "How will my trading trip to the south turn out?", etc. The shaman beats his drum until, overwhelmed by his spirits, his body trembles and he falls into a deep sleep. When he comes to, he answers the question, telling what "appeared" to him⁴⁷.

On one occasion a young man from San Francisco, claiming to be a Hindu sadhu on a pilgrimage, passed through our village. At his request, I took him to watch a shamanic seance. Irkha, the shaman who was performing, "woke" from one of his spells and said to me, "Tell your friend that I see something concerning his pilgrimage. He should discontinue going any further west; otherwise, in one month he will become desperately ill. He will not die, but the hardship will be great. Tell him to turn back and worship the gods at Muktinath (a holy place in north central Nepal). If he obeys, he will not come ill". The man took his advice and started for Muktinath the following day.

The shaman performs other prodigious feats, too, all of which give evidence to his audience that he has transcended the human plane. In every seance he exhibits a special "mastery over fire". When his guardian animal spirits descend upon him, he angrily leaps upon the fire and puts it out with his hands. In the darkness, the cries of animals come from his lips. Taking hot coals from the fire, he eats them. He picks up the hot cooking tripod with his bare hands and places it on the back of his neck. He demonstrates to his audience that he has not been harmed--a feat which greatly astonishes them.

The ceremonies and activities described above are for the purpose of retrieving the purus from the road to the underworld. In the case of a missing sāto or syākwā, the shaman is dealing with visible entities, and as a result, the ceremonies involved are more ritualistic, employing a number of material symbols. A missing sāto is believed to be in the possession of a spirit known as Sepā Serong, and the shaman tries first to retrieve it without leaving the village. A mat is spread in front of the patient's house, and on the mat is a chicken held captive in a basket. Beside the basket is a dish of water, the receptacle for the sāto. The shaman and nine participants dance out of the house, around the basket in the presence of Sepā Serong, and back into the house. This is repeated nine times. One of the dancers is a deaf-mute, who is usually very ugly, having a large protruding goiter. Painted up in a ludicrous way and wearing only a loincloth, he calls out to Sepā Serong in long shrill cries. This causes Sepā Serong to laugh with great hilarity, giving the soul a chance to escape. Sometimes Sepā Serong is not in a laughing mood, however, and the deaf-mute has to go to extra measures--like the enactment of a copulating dog⁵¹. After the last round of dancing, the chicken is taken from its basket, mesmerized, and laid across the dish of water. The audience is required to watch from hiding so as not to frighten the sāto and prevent its return. When the sāto arrives, the chicken jumps to its feet and squawks--he is the first to perceive it. One of the assistants rushes to the dish and hopefully pulls out an insect or bug. This is the patient's sāto.

The patient's syākwā is re-called in a similar manner. The shaman's assistant brings water from the spring in a wooden jug. He purifies the jug by rubbing it with the sacred barma plant. A white cloth is tied around the neck of the jug, and another is laid over its mouth. The jug is placed at the edge of the roof where the assistant watches it from hiding. Inside the house, the shaman goes into a trance and roams the countryside for the syākwā. If he finds it, he shouts "Hap!" and the assistant rushes to the jug and covers its mouth with his hand. If he is quick enough, inside the jug will be the syākwā, a small bundle of dry skin and fingernails bound into a piece of the patient's garment, and tied with strands of his hair.

Often the shaman is not able to retrieve the sāto or syākwā in the manner described above. In such case, he is required to search for it with his 'wild-goat stave'--a practice which in symbolic form retains all the traditional themes of a journey beyond. I have watched this practice several times, though I have never seen the preliminary ceremony in which the stick is "animated". Two shamans and one assistant participate. The first shaman, obviously in a state of ecstasy, holds onto the stick with both hands. The stick vibrates violently and seemingly pulls him along. The second shaman, in full costume, follows, throwing chyonām or 'magical seed' at the stick to keep it animated. The



A shaman dancing - recalling the soul.

could see everything in all four directions, but he would not cure the evil spirits responsible for the illness—they were his nieces. Finally, the king sent for the shaman, Purañ Tsan. When Purañ Tsan arrived, he simply blew a magic spell into some water, gave it to the queen to drink, and she was cured.

"The nine sisters, nieces of Naltya the sorcerer, heard of Purañ Tsan's deed. They counteracted his magic by making the queen ill again, and then spreading the rumor that Purañ Tsan was really an evil wizard. "Look", they said, "when he's here she gets better, and when he leaves she becomes ill again". Finally, the king, convinced that Purañ Tsan really must be evil, sent his troops in full armor to drive him from the palace. This greatly embarrassed and irritated Purañ Tsan who fled for home. He complained to his two wives, Juhmā and Padmā, saying, "My visit to the king was worse than useless. I have been embarrassed to the limit. I can no longer face the world. Me! One who has come into being on his own! Chased by the king as an evil wizard! It's worse than losing one's caste. It would be better if I just disappeared into the underworld for awhile".

"But before Purañ Tsan left for the underworld, he, by magic, introduced a piece of lime into the queen's stomach, and a leaf of the syārgwā tree into her heart to make sure she would not become well until he was called for. He enjoined his two wives to tell no one the secret of where he went; "unless", he said, "they bring you a pot full of gold and a pot full of silver. And when you tell them", he said, "give them this riddle:

The road the shaman took is marked by lime and ṛiṛi,
syārgwā and thiri.

The road the evil wizard took is marked by ashes and
wālwāl, soot and wālwāl".

"Purañ Tsan went down, down, down, nine steps down into the underworld. When he got there, the kings of the underworld were in session at a great meeting with nine councils. Purañ Tsan presented himself for work, and asked for a place to stay. They asked his occupation, and he replied that he was a blacksmith. So they let him set up a shop in the downstairs floor of the headman's house, where he fashioned knives, sickles, axes, and other implements of iron.

"While Purañ Tsan was working as a smith in the underworld, the queen of Golkhādā was growing worse. It was expected that she would die any day. The king, wondering if he hadn't acted unwisely toward Purañ Tsan sent for him again. The king's soldiers came to Purañ Tsan's two wives, and asked, "Where's Purañ Tsan"? "Purañ Tsan has not yet returned from the palace", they replied. "What's the meaning of this"? the soldiers wondered, "he should have been home by now!". But his wives insisted that they hadn't seen him.

"Finally, sometime later, the soldiers suspected Tsan's wives of withholding the truth, and they threatened them saying, "If you don't tell us where he went, we'll shove you off a cliff, we'll throw you in the river". So the wives made their bargain, "If you give us a pot of gold and a pot of silver, we'll tell you where he went". The soldiers complied and were given the following directions:

The road the shaman took is marked by lime and ṛiṛi,
syārgwā and thiri.

The road the evil wizard took is marked by ashes and
wālwāl, soot and wālwāl.

"The soldiers were smart enough to follow the road marked by lime and syārgwā. As they went, they descended deep into the underworld and came upon another council meeting. They asked the kings if they had seen the shaman Purañ Tsan. "No, we haven't seen such a man", they said. "There is only one outsider here, and that's a blacksmith living in the bottom floor of the headman's house. He fashions implements of iron". So the soldiers went there and asked, "Hey, brother Tiku, have you seen the shaman Purañ Tsan around"? "No, I haven't seen him", Tsan replied. "I've spent all my time right here working at the forge". "Well, then", the soldiers asked, "have you heard any rumors about such a person"? Purañ Tsan thought for a moment and replied, "Well, I once heard of someone who meets your description over in the East Country. Why don't you go check on him?"

"The soldiers went to the East Country and met up with goblins and ogres. The goblins smelled the flesh of the soldiers and came after them with a terrific clamour and racket. The soldiers fled in terror and barely escaped. Again they came to the place of Purañ Tsan. "That's not the place", they complained. "You lied to us and we were nearly killed". "Well", replied Tsan "I heard a very slight rumor that the one you are looking for might be in the West Country".

"The soldiers went to the West Country, where again they met up with ogres and goblins. The goblins again smelled their flesh and came after them in hot pursuit. The soldiers were so terrified they nearly died. When they returned to the forge of Purañ Tsan they said, "Brother Tiku, the blacksmith, you are the shaman, you are the healer. On your head is a feather headdress". Purañ Tsan denied the charge saying, "I am not the one, sirs. On my head is the tumpine I use to carry coal to the forge".

"Brother Tiku the blacksmith, you are the shaman, you are the healer. Around your eyes is the soot of the forge". Purañ Tsan denied it saying, "I am not the one, sirs. On my way to the forge I blacked my eyes so I wouldn't be blinded by the snow".

"Brother Tiku the blacksmith, you are the shaman, you are the healer. On your ears is the leaf of the syārgwā tree". Purañ Tsan

17. (p. 131) "The Tungus shaman who has a snake as a helping spirit attempts to imitate the reptile's motions during the seance; another, having the whirlwind as a helping spirit, behaves accordingly" (Eliade 1964:92).
18. (p. 131) Speaking in other languages is attested in Siberia as well. Czaplicka cites the Yakut shaman Tiuspuit as telling Sieroszewski: "When I was travelling in the north, I came upon a heap of wood in the mountains, and as I just wanted to cook some dinner, I set this on fire. Now, under this heap was buried a well known Tungus shaman, and so his amagrat leapt into me" (Czaplicka 1914:184). Eliade reasons that this is why Tiuspuit uttered Tungusic words during seances. He adds that "he received other spirits too--Russians, Mongols, and so on--and spoke their languages" (1964:82).
19. (p. 132) In Siberia, public initiation does not normally occur until after the candidate's full instruction--that is, both from the spirits and also from the master shaman. The Kham-Magar practice, however, is in keeping with Eliade's observation that the public ceremony "only confirms and validates the real ecstatic and secret initiation, which is the work of the spirits, and is completed by apprenticeship to a master shaman" (1964:110).
20. (p. 132) According to Siberian legends (and Kham-Magar legends as well) the first shaman was born in a tree. Of special interest is the Yakut legend that shamans still are born in the branches of a giant fir tree in the north. Eliade shows that the tree symbolizes the mythological World Tree which lies at the center of the world, whose roots extend to the underworld, and whose crown ascends into heaven (Eliade 1964:269-74). The Tree for the Kham-Magars figures in all shamanistic seances, and adorns the shaman's burial cairn.
21. (p. 132) The Buryat initiation ceremony is preceded by a purification rite which has the following details: water is drawn from a spring and purified by throwing wild thyme, juniper, and pine bark into the pot. They also offer libations of wine and brandy to the candidate's ancestors. These purification rites are obligatory at least once a year, if not every month at the time of the new moon (Eliade 1964:116).
22. (p. 133) The Tungus in their initiation ceremony use two poles, called turo. A turo is described as a tree "the large branches of which have been cut off, but whose crowns are preserved" (Eliade 1964:111).
23. (p. 135) In the Tungus initiation ceremony, the neophyte and his teacher sit at the foot of the turo (ceremonial pole) and the teacher calls the spirits one by one, and sends them to the candidate. When the spirits enter, the elders examine the candidate, who must convince them that he has really received the spirit (Eliade 1964:112).
24. (p. 135) The Altaic tribes practice a ceremony lasting two or three evenings in which the head and bones of a horse are offered to God. It is a long and complex ceremony, very rich and dramatic in its enactment. After killing the animal, the shaman symbolically mounts the animal's soul (as was done in the Kham-Magar ceremony) and describes with great beauty his ascent to heaven to the very throne of God, as he climbs step by step the ceremonial tree which has been erected for the purpose (Czaplicka 1914:298-303).
25. (p. 135) The Samoyed shaman of Siberia ties a handkerchief over his eyes "so that he can penetrate into the spirit world by his own inner sight" (Czaplicka 1914:203).
26. (p. 135) After the Tungus performance of summoning the spirits, it is said that the new shaman climbs to the upper beam of the turo and remains there for some time (Eliade 1964:112). Among the Buryat, the "father shaman" ascends to the top of the tree first, and is followed by the candidate (Eliade 1964:119).
27. (p. 135) The Altaic shaman enjoys a similar clairvoyance. On one of his celestial journeys he is described as halting in the third heaven where he "gives information concerning the coming weather, the epidemics, and misfortunes that threaten" (Eliade 1964:195,196).
28. (p. 137) Jochelson relates that he once bought a costume from a shaman after much help and persuasion on the part of the chief. The shaman cried because he had been deprived of what he saw as the main source of his shamanistic power (Jochelson 1905:162-5). Eliade relates that among the Birtarchen, the costume is not allowed to leave the clan, primarily because it must not be worn by anyone who cannot control the spirits, for the result would be trouble for the whole community (Eliade 1964:147).
29. (p. 137) Casanovicz notes that "the shaman dons a special coat made of cloth or bearskin, hung with pieces of iron--rattles, rings, and representations of animals" (1924:424). The Altaic costume resembles an owl. On the back of the costume are sewn animal pelts and two copper disks. The Yakut costume imitates a complete bird skeleton in iron, and includes iron disks representing the sun as well as lunar crescents. The Buryat costume includes a coat upon which the figures of snakes, and game skins are fastened. In Western Siberia, the skins of tutelary animals are fastened to the headgear. (Eliade 1964:149-157).

caught and re-introduced into the patient through the mouth (Bogoraz 1904).

44. (p. 144) The concept of spirits of the dead troubling living persons is common in many parts of Asia--North and South. But actual "possession" by these spirits is allegedly restricted to the traditions of South Asia and India. In the Indian tradition, the medium or sorcerer induces the troubling spirit to possess his client and reveal the cause of his anger and prescribe how he should be appeased. Apparently, (according to Höfer) this type of "induced" possession has not been reported among other indigenous ethnic groups of the Himalayas, such as the Gurung, Magar, Limbu, Rai, Lepcha, etc. (Höfer 1974:159-165). (See also Höfer and Shrestha 1972).

45. (p. 144) Measures for the prevention of the soul's return are common in Siberia as well. In some places the funeral party takes another road back to the village to confuse the dead man. In others, the man's sled or cart is burned at the cemetery to prevent him from leaving (Eliade 1964:207). Czaplicka quotes Mordvinoff as saying (concerning the Tungus), "As they return from the funeral ceremony, the relatives try to obliterate the tracks they have made in the snow, or else cut down trees so that they fall across the way, in order to prevent the return of the dead" (Czaplicka 1914:155,156). The custom of guiding the soul from the village by means of a white cloth can be found among the Bhutias of Taklakot or Purang. They too call the cloth a "way cloth" (Sherring 1906:123, 124).

46. (p. 144) This practice of the Kham-Magars is almost identical to a practice of the non-Buddhist Bhutias in and around Taklakot or Purang (in Tibet near the extreme northwest corner of Nepal). For the final death ceremony, a yak (often replaced by a sheep or goat) which represents the deceased and is of the same sex, is dressed up with the clothes of the deceased and carefully fed by the relatives. An old man well versed in the lore of the otherworld (corresponding to the Kham-Magar seer) instructs the spirit of the deceased as to the paths it should follow, and the dangers it should avoid in reaching its destination. On the fourth (last) day of the ceremony, the son-in-law or sister's son of the deceased leads the animal to a distant spot where it is killed and eaten by low-caste Bhutias (Sherring 1906:123-131). In Siberia, the funerary banquet is very elaborate and employs the shaman in escorting the soul of the dead to the underworld--a practice which has undergone extensive modification, and is only a symbolic gesture in the Kham-Magar tradition.

47. (p. 145) Shirokogoroff observed similar practices among the Manchus of Siberia. At the beginning of a seance, after a particular spirit has entered the shaman, he falls to the floor. His assistants ask him questions and he answers.

Eliade interprets this particular activity as a means of demonstrating that the shaman is already in the nether regions (Eliade 1964:241).

48. (p. 146) The practice of "entering into enlightenment" closely resembles the "preliminary seance" of the Buryat in which the shaman determines whether his patient's soul has simply strayed away, or whether it has been stolen and is captive in the underworld. The preliminary seance consists of searching for the patient's soul in the area near the village, where, if found, its re-installation is easy. If it cannot be found near the village, it is assumed that it has been stolen and taken captive, in which case sacrifices and a trip to the underworld are necessary (Eliade 1964:218). Healing among the Yenisei Ostyak requires two ecstatic journeys. The first is more of a rapid survey, and it is during the second, which ends in a trance, that the shaman enters deep into the beyond (Eliade 1964:223). Among the Tungus of Manchuria the preliminary seance is referred to as a "little shamanizing" and is conducted to determine if the soul is imprisoned in the underworld (Eliade 1964:240).

49. (p. 146) The ritual journeys of the Thulung Rai also employ real geographic names. The journeys, however, are not ecstatic and can be performed by a layman with sufficient knowledge of the chants (Allen 1974:6-11). The Tungus shaman of Manchuria, when making a mystical journey to the otherworld, reaches a mountain pass in the northwest which he descends into the underworld. He meets spirits and other shamans, and wards off their arrows with his drum. He sings of all the difficulties of his journey, so that the audience can follow him step by step. After going through a narrow hole and crossing three streams, he comes to the infernal regions. He finds the patient's soul and after negotiations with the spirits he brings it back to the patient (Eliade 1964:240).

50. (p. 147) Among certain Ostyak peoples, the shaman, after returning from his ecstatic journey prophesies the future for each person in the gathering (Eliade 1964:226).

51. (p. 148) A similar technique is found among the Ostyak-Vasyugan. The shaman, under certain circumstances, sends one of his helping spirits to the underworld to find the patient's soul. When he finds the chief, he suddenly produces from his breast a spirit in the shape of a bear; the chief is frightened and lets the patient's soul escape (Eliade 1964:221).

52. (p. 150) Illness caused by the intrusion of a magical object into the body seems to be related more to a South Asian complex (Eliade 1964:215). "Hunter godlings" have been reported in the tradition of the Southern Magars as well, but their descriptions are somewhat different. They do, however,

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